

# digital storytelling... *for all ages*

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## basic premise:

- Digital storytelling has emphasized movie making skills more than writing skills.
- Too technical for most students in the youngest grades to do.
- I will demonstrate a method that makes it easier for students and teachers to do digital storytelling.

## defining digital storytelling:

- Sharing stories through words, pictures, video and audio.
- Often made up of old snapshots & clip-art.
- Narrated by the author.
- Usually 1-5 minutes long.
- Often autobiographical

- Often emotional, sometimes therapeutic.
- Can be shared on the Web.
- Can be any type of story.

## educational benefits:

- Developing writing and reading skills.
- Creativity enhancement.
- Knowledge management.
- Synergistic effect – more than words or pictures alone.
- Developing visual literacy skills.
- Developing technology skills.
- The work can be tied to national standards.

## more educational benefits

- Can be made to be interactive.
- Can foster presentation skills.
- Provides a global audience for student writing.
- Can be fun and motivational.
- Provides a good outlet for personal expression. Can be therapeutic.
- Moving to watch. Can affect us emotionally.

## educational applications:

- Language arts skills:
- communication skills
- sequential thinking.
- presentation skills.
- Technology classes.
- Art classes.
- Visual literacy skills.
- Media literacy.

**more educational applications:**

- Social studies.
- The sciences.
- Math.
- Foreign language.
- Cultural understanding.
- Part of portfolios.
- Business presentations, ads.

**thinking visually –  
developing visual literacy:**

- Synergistic effect – more than words or pictures alone.
- Visual and auditory messages.
- Working in the affective domain.
- How visual communicators work.
- Understanding mass media.

**presenting the story:**

- Presentation skills are becoming a required educational outcome in many schools and states.
- Digital storytelling allows young students to develop and practice those presentation skills.

**the writing process:**

- Teachers often seem to be concentrating more on the movie making process rather than the writing process.
- Too difficult for young students to undertake independently (and often times too difficult for their teachers also).

**storytelling traditions:**

- Oral storytelling
- Written narratives, short stories
- Digital movies

**oral storytelling traditions:**

- Native people passed along culture and norms.
- Often involved a moral.
- Fact vs. fiction.
- We love to hear a story.
- Also involved acting skills.

**written stories:**

- Great short stories, essays... Stephen King, James Herriot, children's authors.
- Involves rich language.
- Can "paint" a picture.

**digital movies:**

- Can add visuals to the story.
- Can add music, sound effects.
- Can add graphics, animation.
- Can be interactive.
- Can be shared on the Web or other electronic format.
- Can be changed or adapted.

**the power of digital stories:**

- Synergistic effect – more than words or pictures alone.
- Fun, motivational.
- Personal expression, therapeutic.
- Moving to watch. Affects us emotionally.
- Tech skills developed.
- Visual literacy skills.
- Provides a global audience.
- making digital stories interactive
- Viewers can respond and branch through a story.

- Readers click on pop-up questions or objects which causes the story to branch or triggers actions.
- Hyperlinks: branching, paths.
- Hot Spots: sounds, music, animation.

### **components of a digital story:**

- Words.
- Still Pictures.
- Graphics, icons, symbols.
- Pictures from the Web, clip art.
- Video clips.
- Recorded narration.
- Music, sound effects.
- Transitions.
- Animation.

### **ten step development process:**

1. Start with a good story.
2. Write an outline/ script.
3. Storyboard.
4. Brainstorm visual ideas, music.
5. Find visuals, shoot.
6. Edit visuals.
7. Add titles, graphics.
8. Record narration.
9. Match visuals to audio. Add music.
10. Produce, revise, present, distribute.

### **storyboarding:**

*“Without a structure students will focus on adding images, music and other elements instead of focusing on the content and organization.”*

Meg Ormiston

### **ways to build a digital story:**

- Stills in a folder.
- PowerPoint (export PNGs).
- Slide Show programs.
- Video editing programs,
- Flash.
- DVD authoring.
- Codecs.

### **software options:**

- iPhoto
- Adobe Photoshop Elements
- Microsoft PhotoStory
- Adobe Premiere Elements
- iMovie
- Clicker

### **iPhoto:**

- Pros –
  - Part of iLife suite
  - Really easy
  - Nice looking transitions
  - Makes QuickTime movies
- Cons –
  - Mac only
  - Lacks features, such as titles

### **Adobe PhotoShop Elements:**

- Pros –
  - Integrated with Photoshop Elements
  - Nice pan and zoom effect
  - Can add clip art
  - Good edit control
- Cons –
  - Windows only
  - Only exports WMV movie files
  - Some performance problems

### Microsoft Photo Story:

- Pros –  
Free!  
Easy  
Pan and zoom  
Runs smoothly
- Cons –  
Windows only  
No timeline control

### Adobe Premiere Elements:

- Pros –  
Integrates with Photoshop Elements  
Good timeline control  
Powerful  
Can make DVD's
- Cons –  
Complicated  
Performance problems

### iMovie:

- Pros –  
Part of iLife suite  
Really easy  
Makes QuickTime files  
Can mix stills and video
- Cons –  
Mac only  
Limited audio control

### Clicker

- Pros –  
Great for early grades  
Can read aloud  
Can be interactive  
Cross platform
- Cons –  
Gets complex to edit  
No movie file output

### Digital Storytelling with Clicker

- Story starter templates can be used to jumpstart the digital story creation process.

- Students load in a template that guides them through writing a story.
- They click to add words, graphics, still photos and even video clips to craft a story.

### the writing process:

- Improving writing skills is the main objective!
- writing genres
- Narrative
- Instructional
- Persuasive
- Personal Expression
- Book Report?
- Autobiography?

### personal narratives:

- Character stories.
- Memorial stories.
- Stories about events in our lives.
- Adventure stories.
- Accomplishment stories.
- Stories about places in our lives.
- Stories about what we do.
- Recovery stories.
- Love stories –discovery stories.

### historical themes and events:

- Could be “faction”.
- Based on material students explore.
- Facilitates research and organizational skills.
- Needs to go beyond the “encyclopedia entry”.

### **informational or instructional:**

- Deliver instructional content on many different topics, including: math, science, social studies, etc.
- Can be a “how to” sequence.
- Technical writing.

### **starting the story:**

- “Blank page syndrome” - the beginning is what often troubles aspiring writers.
- Innovative teachers have used various story-starter techniques to help students overcome initial writer’s block for decades.
- For 2nd graders or college students.
- Story-starters are viable techniques for stimulating written creativity, and digital technologies can improve them.
- writing prompts
- “Digital story starters”
- Techniques include:
- Complete the story.
- What-if prompts.
- Different endings.
- Describe the picture.
- Collaborative stories.
- Picture stories.

### **digital story starter templates:**

- “About Me”
- “Digital Diary”
- “All About My...”
- “What I Like...”
- Topic based presentation
- “Create an Ad”
- “How To”

- “Digital Tour”
- “Tell a Tale”
- “Creativity Study”
- “Virtual Travels”
- “Creature Features”

### **things to look at:**

- Overall purpose of the story.
- Narrator’s point of view.
- A dramatic question (or questions).
- Choice of content.
- Clarity of voice.
- Pacing of the narrative.
- Meaningful soundtrack.
- Quality of the images.
- Economy of the story detail.
- Good grammar and language usage.

### **making it easier – planning:**

- Brainstorming session – a memory.
- Story web – connect the memories.
- Sequence page – fold up paper.
- Script – one or two sentences per image.
- Show examples.

### **brainstorming**

- story web
- sequence page

### **making it easier – audio:**

- Record narration separately.
- Use external mike.
- Set up recording booth.
- Record narration first.
- Speak real slowly.

**making it easier – production:**

- Pair with older kid/aid.
- Keep in a folder.
- Limit to 6 -10 pictures.
- Allow “fair use” of images and music.
- Use keyword graphics.
- Don’t grade?

**sharing students’ stories:**

- curriculum nights –
- share stories with parents.
- put online or on disk.
- creating a hard copy –
- printed booklet
- Festivals and contests

**An effective tool for teachers:**

Stories created by teachers can serve:

- as a lesson hook.
- as a way to integrate multimedia into the curriculum.
- as a way to make difficult content more understandable.
- to facilitate classroom discussion.

*“ Stories are powerful vehicles for gaining a student’s attention, conveying practical or moral lessons, and sparking thought.”*

*Mark Standley*

**classroom challenges:**

- Technical problems.
- Becomes competitive.
- Don’t mistake activity for achievement.
- Measurable?
- Tied to standards?

- Privacy, appropriateness issues.
- Copyright violations.

**copyright disclaimer:**

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**For handouts, links, publications, workshops and presentations contact:**

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